



NATIONAL GEOSPATIAL-INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

4600 SANGAMORE ROAD
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20816-5003

NEWS RELEASE

Public Affairs Office

Release Date: Oct. 14, 2005 Contact: Susan Meisner, 301-227-3132, susan.h.meisner@nga.mil

Release Number: 05-15

Steve Honda, 301-227-2057; Stephen.honda@nga.mil

Combined Exercise Integrates Imagery Intelligence, Operations

BETHESDA, Md.—“The goal of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA)-led Empire Challenge 2005 (EC05) exercise is to improve coalition interoperability within the imagery intelligence (IMINT) architecture,” said Army Lt. Col. Greg Creech of NGA’s Airborne Integration Office.

The exercise is taking place Oct. 3-21 at the China Lake Naval Air Warfare Center, China Lake, Calif. It will use four geographically adjacent test ranges and the Distributed Common Ground/Surface System-Imagery or “DCGS-I” test bed, a mobile asset managed by the Air Force Electronic Systems Command, Hanscom Air Force Base, Mass., as well as Navy facilities at China Lake and the Office of Naval Intelligence, Fleet Intelligence Support Team, on the East Coast.

NGA and coalition planners developed the idea for the exercise in the aftermath of recent combat operations, during which operational forces had difficulty integrating coalition IMINT assets into operational theater level intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance structures.

The exercise will employ current and future elements of the DCGS family of systems. Exercise planners developed an architecture that will provide United Kingdom and Australian forces data from U.S. and coalition airborne sensors over extremely low-bandwidth communications paths. Those forces will then process the data and once processed, they will transmit data back to the United States, effectively closing the loop.

Analysts will monitor data integrity at each node to assure adherence to recognized interoperability standards.

“We designed Empire Challenge to identify shortfalls and implement common technical solutions, and then test these solutions in a combined exercise to evaluate each of them,” said Creech. Empire Challenge participants will run scenarios to verify standards and demonstrate inherent DCGS interoperability.

- more -

Combined Exercise Integrates Imagery Intelligence, Operations

Page 2

NGA, in coordination with coalition partner representatives, established a multi-year incremental plan to demonstrate allied airborne and ground system interoperability. EC05 is the second event in this series of demonstrations and is also serving as the operational phase for a larger-scale Joint Staff/U.S. Joint Forces Command effort to fix identified problems with intelligence collection management. The wider goal is to establish a distributed, collaborative working environment for the exploitation of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance products with coalition partners such as the United Kingdom and Australia.

Canada is participating as an observer during EC05 and will be a full participant in EC06.

NGA is a Department of Defense combat support agency and a member of the National Intelligence Community. The Agency's mission is to provide timely, relevant and accurate geospatial intelligence—that shows what's where on the Earth—in support of our national security. Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., NGA has major facilities in the Washington, D.C., Northern Virginia and St. Louis, Mo., areas with NGA support teams worldwide.